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Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Note verbale dated 20 April 2016 from the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and, on behalf of Bangladesh in its capacity as Chair of the Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, has the honour to transmit herewith the text of the resolution entitled "The role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, parliaments, parliamentarians and international and regional organizations in providing necessary protection and urgent support to those who have become refugees through war, internal conflict and social circumstances, according to the principles of international humanitarian law and international conventions", adopted unanimously on 20 October 2015 by the 133rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Geneva (see annex).

The Permanent Mission requests that the present note verbale and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 70 and 124.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 20 April 2016 from the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

The role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, parliaments, parliamentarians, and international and regional organizations in providing necessary protection and urgent support to those who have become refugees through war, internal conflict and social circumstances, according to the principles of international humanitarian law and international conventions

Resolution adopted unanimously on 20 October 2015 by the 133rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Geneva

The 133rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Expressing its utmost concern about the humanitarian tragedies caused by the recent worsening of the refugee crisis, which has itself led to a rise in the number of refugees to over 30 million, a significant increase which makes this refugee crisis, in the wake of the deterioration of the political and military situations in some Middle Eastern and African countries, the worst since the Second World War,

Deeply troubled by the deaths and the suffering recently endured by thousands of refugees from some Middle Eastern and African countries from exposure to severe weather or lack of food or shelter,

Noting with concern that the United Nations estimates that many thousands of refugees and forced migrants from some Middle Eastern and African countries have been registered daily over the last three months of this year and that a significant portion of the population of those countries are at risk of becoming refugees, particularly those from the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, Somalia and Libya, a situation which exacerbates the humanitarian disaster for refugees even further,

Cognizant of the fact that a lasting solution to the problem of refugees is to be found through negotiation, and particularly through the peaceful settlement of internal conflicts,

Emphasizing the vital role of regional organizations in helping countries and warring factions to reach peaceful settlements to internal conflicts,

Underlining the seriousness of the conditions reported by the International Labour Organization with respect to the social and economic pressures arising from the deterioration of the refugee crisis over the last three months in host countries and in view of rising levels of unemployment in those countries, of refugee child labour, of the lower chances of benefiting from public services, and of their worsening quality, as well as of lower social cohesion between refugees and local communities,

Stressing the responsibility of regional organizations and the international community, in particular donor and neighbouring countries, to render support in order to help increase the capacity of host countries to deal with refugees, provide a humanitarian environment and solve the problems associated with refugees,

Taking into consideration the United Nations Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which acknowledge that all people, without discrimination, should be able to enjoy their basic rights and freedoms, and which advocate the enhancement of international cooperation for the resolution of humanitarian problems,

Recalling the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and its Protocol (1967), which provide that refugees shall enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms, and which emphasize the social and humanitarian nature of issues relating to refugees, without any discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, gender, age or country of origin,

Also recalling the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their additional protocols of 1977, particularly as regards the preferential treatment of refugees,

Emphasizing the need to protect refugees from persecution and fear, as well as to provide the necessary protection to women and child refugees and to other vulnerable groups,

Referring to the Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (1950) and United Nations General Assembly resolution 51/73 (1996) concerning the exploitation of women and child refugees and their use as soldiers or human shields in armed conflicts, as well as of other actions which endanger their safety or threaten their personal security,

Stressing that children, adolescents and young people constitute particularly vulnerable groups and are overrepresented among migrants and refugees, and face specific challenges that include isolation, exclusion, discrimination and insecurity,

Recognizing that women refugees are especially vulnerable to trafficking, abuse, exploitation, discrimination, unpaid work and gender-based violence, including sexual violence,

Renewing its commitment to the principles of international humanitarian law, international law on refugees and international human rights law to ensure international protection for refugees, whether through provisional or permanent measures, so as to safeguard their legal and social rights,

1. *Calls on* parliaments to cooperate with governmental and non-governmental national organizations, as well as with regional and international organizations, to identify the reasons for refugee flows;

2. *Also calls on* parliaments to cooperate with the relevant national organizations and regional and international parliamentary organizations, and with the regional and international governmental organizations, in the preparation of work programmes and projects for spreading the culture of tolerance and moderation and the principles of common international values, and for combating backwardness, illiteracy and fanaticism of any kind whatsoever;

3. *Regrets* that efforts made by a number of developing countries are hampered by the policy of imposing sanctions through unilateral measures, and considers that such a policy directly affects the welfare of ordinary people and contributes to the escalation of the flow of refugees;

4. *Re-emphasizes* the compliance of United Nations Member States with the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other nations, respect for

national sovereignty, peaceful settlement of disputes and the non-use of force or threats of force, so that the peoples of the world may escape the ordeals of combat and war and the movement of populations from their home countries;

5. *Acknowledges* the principle of the "common international responsibility" of the United Nations and other regional and international organizations to protect refugees from harm through providing urgent humanitarian aid and support by host countries, ensuring that refugees enjoy their internationally recognized human rights, thereby expediting the implementation of international and regional programmes on international cooperation for sustainable economic development;

6. *Calls on* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and national and international non-governmental organizations to bear their responsibility and provide humane conditions for refugees;

7. *Invites* Member Parliaments, regional and international parliamentary organizations and the international community to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and all other international and regional organizations concerned with refugee affairs, in order to facilitate the task of monitoring the application of international rules for protecting refugees and providing them with accommodation and in order to ensure that the rights granted to them under international conventions are guaranteed;

8. *Reminds* all countries hosting refugees of the need to comply with the principles of international humanitarian law and international law on refugees with respect to providing them with the necessary care and prohibiting hostilities against their lives or any abuse offensive to their dignity, or the handing down of judgments without trial, while taking all precautionary measures to save the lives of refugees, and being mindful that every refugee must comply with the legal obligations and measures to preserve public order to which they are subject in the host country;

9. *Calls on* parliaments and governments to develop and implement special measures and gender-sensitive policies for women refugees, especially mothers who must take care not just of themselves but whole families, as well as young women and girls;

10. *Also calls on* parliaments and governments to address the special needs of young refugees, especially those separated from their families and without parental guidance, to take special action to tackle xenophobia, stereotypes and discrimination, and to give children and young people access to age-appropriate information on safe migration and the dangers of trafficking;

11. *Calls for* full respect for the principle of "international relief" contained in international conventions concerning the protection of refugees and emergency and long-term support for health care, food and other supplies, as well as education for children and young people;

12. *Calls on* countries which are occupying territories to undertake not to deport or displace civilian populations to other territories, and to ensure the safety and security of civilians according to the principles of international humanitarian law and international conventions;

13. *Also calls on* host countries not to deport refugees or expel them to the border of another country in which their life would be threatened for ethnic, religious or nationality reasons, membership of a certain social category or political

opinions; and notes that States are required to enable refugees to obtain the right of temporary residence in the event that they are not able to obtain permanent residence pending resettlement in another country;

14. *Invites* Member Parliaments, regional and international parliamentary organizations and the international community to cooperate in sharing the burden of refugees and associated costs with host countries;

15. *Calls on* the United Nations and all countries that are active at the international and regional levels both to settle military conflicts in the Middle East in compliance with resolutions adopted by the international community in order to establish political and military stability in the region and also to avoid threats to international peace and security, drawing attention to the fact that the failure of the international community to deal with the problems of refugees results in other problems of migration and human trafficking;

16. *Also calls on* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the IPU, the international community and national and international non-governmental organizations, to declare a year of refugees.